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Commission on the Status of Women
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Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women

Statement submitted by Endeavour Forum, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

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Statement

Endeavor Forum supports the priority theme of the 52nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women which focuses on "financing for gender equality and empowerment of women". The debate on the priority theme is timely given the fact that women and girls continue to be targets of negative gender equality and sex-selected discrimination. We find the topic of this session especially appropriate because the role of women continues to be crucial for the preservation of our society at large.

First of all, according to the Alan Guttmacher Institute & United Nations Population Division report, 46 million women around the world have abortions each year. In a study of US and Russian women who had abortions, 64% said they felt pressured by others to abort. In other studies available, teen girls are 10 times more likely to attempt suicide if they have had an abortion in the last six months than girls who have not had an abortion, and 2-4 times more likely to commit suicide after abortion compared to adult women.

Over 2000 women have recently signed a sworn testimony that abortion hurts them physically, psychologically and spiritually. Abortion destroys a living human being who has rights, value, worth and dignity and severely damages the natural, maternal bonding instinct of women. This past year the United States' Supreme Court's ruling in the Partial Birth Abortion case, *Gonzales v. Carhart* upholding the federal ban on partial-birth abortion cited some of our sworn statements and recognized that "some women come to regret" having an abortion. The Court stated, "Whether to have an abortion requires a difficult and painful moral decision" and is "fraught with emotional consequence." The Court also noted that "Severe depression and loss of esteem can follow" an abortion (p. 28-29), citing the Brief filed by The Justice Foundation on behalf of Sandra Cano and 180 post-abortive women.

We wish to speak out on the negative gender equality and discrimination that sex-selected abortion causes against girls and women. We are a team of women made up of a body of leaders from various organizations across the US who are hosting workshops on the dangers that abortion can bring to girls and women. Our mission is to educate and empower women on the benefits of womanhood and motherhood and teach women how to be world changers. We are unique in that we all have personal stories related to abortion trauma.

Negative gender equality and discrimination to girls and women through the trauma of abortion is happening in several countries around the world. The problem of abortion hurting women is ignored by the government, media and our culture. We count ourselves as expert witnesses to the physical, emotional and psychological pain and suffering that abortion causes.

Cynthia Collins, a team member from Louisiana, TV Host and director of World Generation Outreach says that "it is alarming how these gruesome practices (forced abortion and female sex selected abortion) have spread to almost every corner of the globe."

Since both delegates and NGO officials are addressing gender equality and discrimination even before birth, Millie Lace, a team member from Arkansas, Licensed Professional Counselor and Director of the National Helpline for Abortion Recovery joins us in requesting governments of all nations to protect the earliest stages of life in order to ensure the empowerment of women and gender equality.

Each of our team members will pay their own expenses to NY and other important national and international conferences, which demonstrates our commitment to the cause of empowering women and ending discrimination against women and girls through abortion. We wish to be a voice of hope for the protection of gender equality and the empowerment of women. When governments and this commission can be educated on the trauma of abortion and its negative effect on gender equality, the discrimination can end and women will be empowered.

The CSW should call upon governments to strengthen their laws and enforcement against sex selected abortion and seek to finance alternatives to abortion that empower women. History has proven that our founding feminists were right. As Alice Paul so eloquently stated, "Abortion is the greatest exploitation against women."